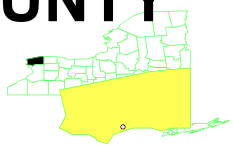
NIAGARA COUNTY REFUSE

NEW YORK

EPA ID# NYD000514257



EPA REGION 2
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 29
Niagara County
Wheatfield

Other Names:
Niagara County Refuse Disposal District

Site Description

The 65-acre Niagara County Refuse site is an inactive landfill that was operated by the Niagara County Refuse Disposal District from 1969 until 1976, when it was officially closed. Large amounts of municipal and industrial solid and chemical wastes are buried on the site. Upon closure in 1976, exposed refuse was covered with about 20 inches of soil and clay, and the site was graded. The Town of Wheatfield acquired the site in 1976. The City of North Tonawanda, with a population of 36,000 lies about 1/2 mile southeast of the site. Wheatfield's population is approximately 9,600. The marshy wetlands to the north of the site form the headwaters of Black Creek, which flows into the Niagara River. Runoff from the site flows north into the creek or south into the river. The Niagara River is the drinking water source for the city of Niagara Falls; its water supply intake is about 3 miles downstream from the landfill. No known public or private wells exist in the area; the water supply comes from outside the site vicinity. Local surface waters are used recreationally.

Site Responsibility: The site is being addressed through Federal and potentially responsible parties' actions.

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 10/01/81
Final Date: 09/01/83

Threats and Contaminants

Site media (soil, groundwater, drainage swale surface water and sediment) were found to contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatiles, pesticides, and heavy metals. Migration of these substances from the site is mitigated by the favorable geologic characteristics of the site. The principal threats at the site were created by leachate seeps which formed a potential exposure route to ecological receptors. There was also evidence that the soil and clay cap installed in 1976 had deteriorated in spots, raising the potential for release of VOCs and possible surface water erosion of wastes. The principal risk to human health was determined to be a potential future risk from the ingestion of groundwater, should drinking water wells be installed adjacent to the site.

Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in a single long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

The EPA began an intensive study of contaminants at the site in 1987. A group comprised of parties potentially responsible for the contamination at the site took over the study in 1989. These investigations were designed to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the site. The investigation was concluded in 1991 and a Remedial Investigation report was drafted in 1992. A Feasibility Study, which presented potential alternatives for a final cleanup, was finalized in 1993. The EPA selected a remedy for the site in September 1993, documented in a Record of Decision. The remedy called for regrading the landfill, construction of a landfill cap meeting the standards for municipal waste facilities in accordance with New York State regulations, construction of a leachate collection system, off-site treatment of the collected leachate, construction of a gas venting system beneath the cap, deed and access restrictions, and ground water and surface water monitoring to track any contaminant migration from the landfill. The EPA's negotiations for the implementation of the selected remedy (remedial design and remedial action) resulted in a consensual agreement with twenty-three potentially responsible parties (a second agreement was reached to include the participation of a single recalcitrant party.) Separate agreements were reached with the major and minor volume contributors of waste to the site.

Cleanup Progress

The remedial design was completed in 1997. A construction contractor was selected in June 1998 from the submitted bid packages. On-site construction commenced in October 1998, following EPA's approval of the remedial action work plan. EPA held two public availability sessions in October 1998 to discuss the construction activities and project schedule. The perimeter collection system was installed during the 1998-1999 winter season to mitigate any leachate generated by the landfill. Cap construction continued throughout the 1999 season, progressing from a north to south direction. In November 1999, construction shut down for the winter season with the project approximately 90% complete. Construction resumed in May 2000 and the cap was completed. On June 30, 2000 EPA determined that all construction activities were completed at the site. A final inspection was held at the site in September 2000. In December 2000, EPA determined that the remedial action had been completed in accordance with the Record of Decision and Remedial Design and the project entered the operation, maintenance, and monitoring phase.

The completed cleanup includes the containment of approximately 3,097,600 tons of contaminated material (1,936,000 cubic yards) and the treatment of 375 pounds per year of VOC/SVOC leachate and 34,743 pounds per year of metal-containing leachate. Since the completion of remedial construction, routine operation and maintenance has been performed at the site. An annual operation, maintenance, and monitoring report was received in February 2002. The monitoring data collected to date confirms that the cap and leachate collection system is operating as designed.

Site Repository

North Towanda Public Library, 505 Meadow Road, North Towanda, New York 14120